

教育学精品原版教材系列

INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

Fourth Edition

C. M. Charles (美) Craig A. Mertler (美)



教育研究方法

外语教学与研究出版社
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

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张莉莉 导读

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北京 BEIJING

京权图字: 01 - 2003 - 4999

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

教育研究方法/(美)查尔斯(Charles, C. M.)等著. —北京:外语教学与研究出版社, 2004. 12
ISBN 7 - 5600 - 4478 - 6

I. 教… II. 查… III. 教育研究方法—高等学校—教材—英文 IV. G40-034

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2004)第 099816 号

Original edition, *Introduction to Educational Research (Fourth Edition)* by C. M. Charles and Craig A. Mertler, published by Pearson Education, Inc., Copyright © 2002 by Pearson Education. All rights reserved.

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责任编辑: 田洪成

出版发行: 外语教学与研究出版社

社 址: 北京市西三环北路 19 号 (100089)

网 址: <http://www.fltrp.com>

印 刷: 北京外国语学院印刷厂

开 本: 787×1092 1/16

印 张: 26.5

版 次: 2004 年 11 月第 1 版 2004 年 11 月第 1 次印刷

书 号: ISBN 7 - 5600 - 4478 - 6/G·2353

定 价: 35.90 元

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教育学精品原版教材系列

总 序

100年前,随着门户开放,我国教育在军事、政治和经济的外力推助下开始变革转型。晚清留学生他山采石,为国人了解西洋风景铺垫了通道。1905年废科举兴学校,封建教育在办学形式上缩身,现代学校教育发轫,教育制度开始和海外通风,教育思想遂为西方话语裹挟。应新兴学校发展需要,教师队伍的建设和扩充成为教育议事日程中的关键问题,师范教育的兴起可谓正逢其时。从教育学教材的翻译引进到自编教材的出现,从海外理论的移植到本土研究的推进,从欧美模式的消长到苏俄模式的用废,我国教育学的发展和教育人才的培养经历了历史的洗涤,刻画了思想者的心路,目睹了国家的命运。百年的历史是中国融入世界的历史,百年的思想是他我纠缠和本土合法性诉求的思想。历史不能回避,思想不能蜷缩,被动地等人来砸门与主动敲人家的门比较起来,哪个更舒展,不言而喻。

改革开放以来,国际化的潮流再度涌动,全球化的声音在耳边渐晰。中西体用的论争失去了旧有的热闹场景,思想的聚会已如空气般自然。加入世贸虽然是我国经济纳入全球化版图的一个里程碑,但它对其他方面的影响是深广的。对游戏规则的熟悉、谨守和利用,是在世界经济贸易圈中获益的基本前提。不了解规则背后的理论基础,不了解构筑理论的基本概念和术语,不了解自己在理论贡献中的主体角色,最终就不可能很好地解析规则,利用规则,乃至参与规则的修订或创制。

作为创造知识、传播知识最大的集散地,高等院校在知识经济话语下的突出地位日益为人认识。创造什么样的知识,如何创造,传播什么样的知识,如何传播,成为高等教育职能和价值追问的核心问题。没有原创的知识,高等院校的研究功能就无法体现,国家核心竞争力的一个重要的支柱也就失去依托。不能把最有价值的知识最有效地传播开去,不能通过知识的传播激活探究的欲望和富有想象的才思,高等院校的教育价值就值得怀疑。无论创造还是传播,一个封闭的教育系统就像一个封闭的大脑一样,无法承载坚重的历史责任。开放乃是必由之路。开放意味着敞开,向一切真知识、真问题、真方法敞开,异国的或本土的,东方的或西方的,古代的或现代的。开放意味着警醒,对知识、问题和方法的边界警醒,对人我的边界警醒,对个体、族和类的边界警醒,对存在与时间的边界警醒:我们在哪里,哪里是我们的去处。

不管是国际化的驱动还是开放意识的释放,作为知识的一种载体,国外图书如春笋般出现在

我国汉语世界。其中有专著，有文集，也不乏教材。在人文社科的大类中，社会学、经济学、法学、管理学、教育学等学科的译著竞相绽出，大大丰富了人们的阅读空间。为适应学习和研究的需要，一些学科的原版教材也开始问世我国图书市场。在行政机关的鼓励和大学自身的倡导下，大学赋予了“双语教育”新的含义。使用原版教材，使用外国语言，似乎成为大学教育水平的一个标志。这是不是如人们非正式批评的那样是一种新教育殖民先不去讨论，但有一点是肯定的：多一种尝试、多一种声音、多一种参照总归是好事。关键的问题是使用者的态度、课程的适应性和教材的质量。汉语永远是国人交流的第一语言。第二语言对熟悉国外同行的学科术语、理论背景和思维习惯是必要的，但终究不能取代母语的理解方式。原版教材保持了国外材料的原汁原味，省去了翻译的中介，有利于直接进入原始的文本而减少失真。但原版教材毕竟是“多”中的“一”，而不是所及课程的唯一。况且原教材有其产生的独特社会和文化背景，这是不可移植的。所以，使用原版教材为参考而不为圭臬，是应然的态度。此外，有的课程适合于采用原版教材，有的不适合，而且，原版教材也非尽是精华，在引进使用时需当警识。

根据我国国务院学位办的分类，教育学是一个一级学科。近年来虽然有不少国外教育著作翻译出版，但鲜有原版引进的教材。教育是特定国家特定历史时期的教育。每个国家有其特殊的教育问题及其相应的问题解决策略和理论框架，但许多问题是世界性的、共有的。在教育服务的国际流通和在教育研究方面的国际合作日见普遍的情形下，我们需要更多地了解国外教育学科的发展状况，借鉴和吸收国外在相关领域的课程和教材建设中的先进思想和经验，扩大视野，提升品质，满足发展的需要。“教育学精品原版教材系列”就是在这样的背景下策划出版的。根据学科自身的特点和跨国的公共度，第一批选择引进了《人类学习的理论》、《教育心理学》、《课程发展：实践指南》、《教育管理：概念及实践》和《教育研究方法》5种教材。根据需要，其他相关教材将陆续引进出版。

“教育学精品原版教材系列”的出版是开放的产物。它本身也是开放的，它的生命力寄希望于读者的关注与批评。

周作宇

于北京师范大学

P R E F A C E

For Whom This Book Is Intended

Introduction to Educational Research, fourth edition, is designed specifically for educators who are new to research and seeking advanced degrees in graduate studies. Most users will be in-service teachers, administrators, special education personnel, coaches, and counselors, but the book is also appropriate for graduate students not yet actively teaching. No prior familiarity with the principles, procedures, or terminology of educational research is required in order to profit fully from this book.

Purposes of the Book

This book has two main purposes, which receive attention simultaneously. The first is to provide *knowledge about educational research*, sufficient for a clear understanding of the following:

- The ethical and philosophical principles adhered to in research
- The nature of research and the scientific process it employs
- Research questions, hypotheses, and hypothesis testing
- The various types of research, their purposes, traits, and designs
- The characteristics, sources, and collection of data
- Procedures for analyzing qualitative and quantitative data
- Published research, where it is found in the library, and how it is interpreted

The second purpose of this book, a purpose that has been made preeminent in this edition (as well as in its immediate predecessor), is to *help graduate students conduct their own research*. Toward that end, specific guidance is provided in

- Identifying satisfactory topics for research
- Framing research questions and subquestions
- Stating research hypotheses and null hypotheses
- Identifying the type of research called for in various topics
- Preparing a research proposal for a selected topic
- Conducting a thorough library search of literature
- Analyzing types of research appropriate for investigating selected topics
- Identifying needed data, its sources, and the procedures by which it is collected
- Analyzing data appropriately
- Answering research questions and testing hypotheses
- Stating findings and drawing conclusions
- Preparing research reports

Organization of the Book

In keeping with the purposes of helping students organize and undertake research while simultaneously acquiring fundamental knowledge about research, the book is organized into four parts, as follows:

Part 1: Orientation to Educational Research. Clarifies the nature of research, explains its rules of operation, identifies standard types of educational research, and reviews the sources of data employed in those types of research.

Part 2: Preliminary Skills Needed for Conducting Research. Includes selecting, refining, and proposing a topic for research, locating published research in the library, and interpreting, summarizing, and annotating published research.

Part 3: Conducting Your Own Research Project. Shows users how to design their own research projects, clarifies the procedures and tools they need for gathering data in their investigations, explains how to analyze qualitative and quantitative research data, present findings, and draw conclusions, and takes students step by step through preparing an appropriate research report.

Part 4: Procedures and Exemplars in Eight Types of Research. Provides details about how the eight major types of research—ethnographic research, descriptive research, historical research, correlational research, action research, evaluation research, experimental and quasi-experimental research, and causal-comparative research—are planned and conducted. Published research reports that exemplify these types of research are reprinted in the chapters.

Chapters in the Book

The book is comprised of 14 chapters, an Appendix, and a glossary. The first nine chapters are sequenced to provide direct guidance in planning, conducting, and reporting research. The last five present types of research and exemplars for study and analysis. Chapter titles are

- Chapter 1. Educational Research: Its Nature and Rules of Operation
- Chapter 2. Types of Educational Research and Corresponding Sources of Data
- Chapter 3. Selecting, Refining, and Proposing a Topic for Research
- Chapter 4. Locating Published Research
- Chapter 5. Interpreting and Summarizing Published Research
- Chapter 6. Designing a Research Project
- Chapter 7. Procedures and Tools for Gathering Data
- Chapter 8. Analyzing Research Data and Presenting Findings

- Chapter 9. Preparing a Research Report
- Chapter 10. Ethnographic Research
- Chapter 11. Descriptive Research and Historical Research
- Chapter 12. Correlational Research
- Chapter 13. Action Research and Evaluation Research
- Chapter 14. Experimental, Quasi-Experimental, and Causal-Comparative Research

Certain courses may well require a sequence different from that presented here. Modifications can and should be made to meet the needs of instructors and students.

Chapter Formats

Chapters are formatted to include the following sections:

Preview. Presented at the beginning of each chapter, the preview provides a brief, but thorough overview of what is to come in the chapter. These previews help readers anticipate and focus on the major topics presented in the chapter.

Targeted Learnings. After examining the preview, readers are directed to look especially for information related to specific chapter topics. These targeted learnings are repeated at the ends of chapters and are helpful for review and self-testing.

Chapter Information Organizer. Immediately following the targeted learnings, a graphic organizer is presented that shows chapter organization and content. These organizers are helpful as advance organizers for learning and as vehicles for review.

The Body of the Chapter. Here, the information, examples, and other explanations that convey chapter contents are presented. Interspersed within the body of the chapter are *application exercises* that call upon readers to interpret or make realistic applications of what they have learned. These exercises are intended to enliven the reading, keep learners actively involved, and reinforce what has been learned.

Applying Technology. This section contains relatively brief presentations and/or discussions of topics related to the contents of the chapter that incorporate the use of technology. Specific topics for the “Applying Technology” section do not consist of a reiteration of the material in the chapter text; rather, this section contains material that could be considered secondary in nature, but that can be used to exemplify or extend the content being discussed. Typically, these sections emphasize technology applications or related Web Sites. Several chapters contain multiple “Applying Technology” sections.

Companion Website Highlight. This edition of the text is substantially enhanced by the inclusion of a Companion Website. Features of the Companion Website that are specifically highlighted in the chapters include supplemental materials which support the text

material, but that were not appropriate for inclusion in the text. These items appear in a format suitable for students to download and print out for their individual use. Examples of these highlighted items include:

- A sample guide for evaluating research
- A sample research proposal rating scale
- A research planning guide checklist
- Sample surveys
- Sample research proposals
- Statistical decision-making trees for both descriptive and inferential statistics
- A sample data file (which students can download and use to gain experience with data analysis)
- Several sample research studies

The Companion Website may be found at <http://www.ablongman.com/mertler4e>

Chapter Summary. A brief summary is presented at the end of each chapter that reiterates the major points covered in the body of the chapter. These summaries help readers tie the information together succinctly.

List of Important Terms. Following the chapter summary, most chapters include a list of important terms discussed in the chapter. Definitions of the terms are not provided; hence the list is useful for review, discussion, and student self-testing. Although the definitions are not provided, a glossary has been provided near the end of the book.

Your Current Status. This section follows the list of important terms near the end of each chapter. It provides a cumulative look at the progress the reader has made through the specific chapter. This knowledge reinforces learning and fosters a sense of accomplishment.

Activities for Thought and Discussion. Presented at the end of each chapter are four to six additional activities that call on students to interpret or apply information presented in the chapter. Students are encouraged to explore the activities individually or in groups. The topics and their interpretations can be used for lively and informative class discussions.

Answers to Chapter Exercises. Suitable answers are presented for the in-text exercises included in the chapter. Alternative answers not presented are often correct; disagreement concerning answers provides students with a valuable opportunity for discussion and exploring concepts in greater depth.

References and Recommended Readings. In-chapter references are cited in this section. Also included are lists of works that have not been cited but that relate to the chapter contents and are recommended for additional, supplemental reading.

Statistical Procedures

Fundamental statistical concepts and procedures appropriate for beginning students of educational research are presented as needed in various chapters. They are explained in relation to the analysis of specific research data and are clarified through many examples; thus, they are not intimidating to the reader. In-depth coverage of statistical topics is presented in the Appendix.

The Appendix

Following the final chapter of the text, an Appendix is presented that presents an overview of statistical concepts and treatments in more depth than is offered elsewhere in the text. That information is assembled in the Appendix for reference or more advanced study.

The Glossary

Research terminology introduced in the text is listed and defined in the glossary.

Changes from the Third Edition

Users familiar with the previous edition of this book will see several changes, the most substantial of which are intended only to enhance the previous editions of the text. These changes include:

- A Companion Website (<http://www.ablongman.com/mertler4e>), which includes the following for each chapter:
 - Chapter objectives
 - A PowerPoint lecture presentation
 - An interactive multiple choice quiz
 - Destinations (related Web Sites)
 - A message board

In addition, several chapters include special features, such as:

- Interactive reinforcement activities
- A variety of downloadable, printable samples (e.g., research proposals, research studies, guides to conducting and evaluating research)
- *Applying Technology* sections for each chapter
- An updated discussion of computer searching using ERIC's on-line database
- Additional pedagogical aids to facilitate understanding
- An expanded glossary

Special Features

This book has several special features to increase the appeal and value to readers while also facilitating the instructor's presentation of material.

Sequenced to Assist Doing Research

As with the previous edition, the book remains organized to help users plan and conduct their first educational research projects. By proceeding through chapter contents and completing the in-text exercises, users will simultaneously prepare a research plan on a topic of importance and will learn how to obtain and analyze data, answer research questions and test hypotheses, and prepare a proper report of their projects.

Readability: Organization and Style

This fourth edition demonstrates continued refinement in *clarity* and *readability*, a trait that many users consider to be a major strength. Throughout, unfamiliar terms are highlighted and/or italicized, and clear definitions are provided. Many examples are provided to make concepts and applications more understandable. At the same time, the material is kept concise, resulting in a book that covers essential concepts without overwhelming the reader.

Pedagogical Features

In keeping with the main purpose of helping users clearly understand and apply research concepts, many pedagogical features have been included in the book. These features include

- *Chapter previews*—provide accurate anticipation of what is to be covered
- *Chapter targeted learnings*—provide lists of key understandings that students are to acquire
- *Chapter organizers*—offer graphic depictions of contents and organization of the chapters
- *In-text application exercises*—give periodic breaks for students to respond to new information, which appear in shaded boxes for emphasis
- *Chapter summaries*—help students comprehend chapter contents succinctly
- *Current status*—help students see the progress they have made and what comes next
- *Lists of important terms*—provide opportunity for review and self-testing
- *End-of-chapter activities*—enable practice, reflection, and discussion
- *An appendix*—reviews and expands statistical concepts and procedures introduced in other chapters as appropriate
- *An expanded glossary*—offers easy reference to research terminology

Reprinted Research Reports

Nine reprinted journal articles are included that exemplify various types of research. The articles, relatively nontechnical, have been specially selected to serve as exemplars to

orient and encourage students who wish to conduct similar types of research. Guided activities and questions for discussion are provided to help students analyze the articles.

Glossary

A glossary of more than 250 terms important in educational research has been provided for easy student reference. The terms are highlighted in boldface when first appearing in the text. This is one of the most comprehensive glossaries presented in any educational research textbook.

Instructor's Manual

Provided gratis to instructors who adopt the text is an instructor's manual that contains

- Organizational suggestions—such as planning a course syllabus; selecting course assignments and activities; and establishing evaluation procedures
- Instructional suggestions—such as introducing the text to students; selecting and presenting contents and activities in class sessions; guiding students in critiquing research reports; guiding students in using the computer as a research tool; and helping students develop tools for data collection
- Test items—including short-answer tests and essay tests

Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of several individuals who made the work on this edition proceed quite smoothly. We would like to thank the staff at Allyn & Bacon Publishing—in particular, Arnis Burvikovs, our editor, Patrice Mailloux and Matthew Forster—for their feedback and support. We would certainly be remiss if we did not acknowledge the valuable comments and suggestions provided by the reviewers of this fourth edition:

Beate Baltes, National University
Julie Bao, Shippensburg University
Vicki LaBoskey, Mills College
William T. Phelan, University of Massachusetts
Lowell Wade Smith, Tennessee State University

In addition, we would like to thank the following reviewers who have kindly analyzed previous editions of the text and have offered many valuable comments and suggestions over the years:

Kevin D. Crehan, University of Nevada at Las Vegas
Alvirda Farmer, San Jose State University

Charlotte Webb Farr, University of Wyoming
Jane A. Goldman, University of Connecticut
Laura D. Goodwin, University of Colorado at Denver
Bryan W. Griffin, Georgia Southern University
Robert L. Hale, Penn State University
Joseph Khazzaka, University of Scranton
Alex G. Ober, Western Maryland College
Pietro J. Pascale, Youngstown State University
Steven Pulos, University of Northern Colorado
Sylvia Roberts, City College of New York
Dale G. Shaw, University of Northern Colorado
William B. Ware, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Douglas C. Wiseman, Plymouth State College
Terrence D. Wong, Marquette University

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Craig A. Mertler

导 读

本书是由C. M. Charles撰写的一本针对初学者的教育研究方法教材，第三版已由中国轻工业出版社翻译出版，本书是Craig A. Mertler参与修订后的第四版，虽与第三版在体系上没有多少区别，但增强了实用性，并提供了丰富的网上资源。读者可以在相关的网页上获得本书的教学课件、阅读材料、参考资料等大量辅助性学习材料。这种网上资源优势以及配套材料的延展性是普通教材不具备的，这使得本书在世界范围内被广泛用作教育研究方法课的基础教材，其相关网页也成为读者互动交流的园地。

本书内容包括四大部分：

第一部分：教育研究的基本知识。本部分共包括两章，第一章首先介绍了研究的性质和特点，指明研究本质上是一个认真、系统、持续的探究过程，研究过程中需遵循一些准则，如法律的、伦理道德的以及哲学的和程序的准则。第一章还特别强调了教师即研究者的观点，倡导教师在行动中开展教育研究。第二章则系统介绍了教育研究的各种类型以及相应的数据来源。界定研究的类型是研究方法中比较复杂的一个问题，本书重点讨论了如何根据待答问题来划分研究的类型。书中还介绍了多种收集数据的方法，如详细的现场描述、简要的研究笔记、情境实录、实物或文献分析、提问、测验与测量等。这些方法涵盖面广，能拓宽研究者收集数据的范围。

第二部分：开展教育研究的初步技能。本部分共包括三章，分别探讨了如何选择课题、查找文献以及怎样做好文献综述等问题。这些内容是研究者摸索研究方向、寻找研究课题过程中需要掌握的基本技能，也是开展实际研究活动的技术准备。课题的选择应该首先从个人的兴趣出发，挖掘现实生活中令人感到疑难疑惑的问题。选题还应建立在文献分析基础上，通过对以往研究的批判性回顾，找到研究的切入点。

第三部分：开展自己的研究活动。本部分共包括四章，具体探讨了以下问题：如何设计研究计划，如何收集实证数据，如何分析并呈现研究结果，以及如何撰写研究报告。这四个问题是研究过程中必须要克服的现实困难，读者应结合自己的研究活动把握相应的操作方法。另外，不同类型的研究对研究过程的要求不一样，读者应透过本书中的案例了解各类研究的区别，把握开展各类研究的技术要求。

第四部分：八种研究类型的程序和范例。本部分介绍了各类研究的特点与程序，并呈现了一些完整的研究案例。案例的介绍围绕研究的类型而展开，下面具体加以说明。

第十章讨论了人种学研究，并提供了两个案例，一个是“酒吧中的教师：从职业身份到私人身份的转变”，另一个是“我不想射杀任何人：城市学生所描述的校外课程”。人种学研究需通过实地生活收集第一手材料，并从被研究者的视角来反映他们所处的环境及其生活状态。如案例所示，人种学研究报告叙述性强，能吸引读者并引起他们的共鸣。人种学研究的长处是强调深度描述，并注重对本土文化的挖掘。然而，人种学研究也有不足，如数据的准确性难以查证，结果不宜于推广等。

另外,人种学研究在资料的分析与报告上灵活性大,初学者对于怎样进行资料的编码分析,以及如何从数据中归纳出理论等颇感困惑。书中的案例能帮助初学者增强研究信心,慢慢摸索出撰写人种学报告的方法与技巧。

第十一章介绍了描述性研究和历史研究。本书指出,描述性研究和历史研究在数据来源、收集和分析数据的方法上相差不多,差异主要表现为以下方面:历史研究关注过去,描述性研究着眼于现在;描述性研究的对象能够参与研究活动,但历史研究却很难找到健在的研究对象;另外,描述性研究可以运用各种测量方法,但历史研究却不容易做到这一点。

描述性研究的案例是:“辞职的市区学校教师:他们为什么要离职,他们现在在做什么”。这一案例采用问卷调查的方法探究了市区学校的教师流失现象,所考察的问题主要是教师离职的原因,以及离职后的状况。调查显示,工作负荷过重,以及得不到领导的足够支持可能是教师离职的重要原因。案例指出,教育行政部门应关心教师们的需要,想办法创设一种更能让教师满意的工作环境。

本章提供的历史研究案例为:“评分法的历史演进”。案例回顾了美国高校最初的成绩评定方法,以及后来逐渐发展起来的通用的评分体系。这个研究说明,目前的数量化评分体系只是评分发展过程中的一种选择,不能认为是最好的做法。透过这个案例,读者可以了解历史研究的现实意义,并懂得材料和证据在历史研究中的分量与价值。

第十二章介绍了相关性研究,即两个或多个变量之间的关联性研究,如案例“初中生的计算机能力与学业成绩间的关系”。相关性研究需要确定研究变量的操作化定义,并通过测验或问卷的方法考察这些变量的数量水平,最后通过统计分析来确定变量之间的关联程度。案例中的数据显示,初中生的计算机能力与学业成绩之间存在着较高的相关关系,即计算机能力强的初中生,总成绩与数学成绩也会比较好。相关性研究的价值是在变量间建立了函数关系,从而可以根据某个已知变量预测其他的未知变量,如根据初中生的计算机能力预测他们的数学成绩。本例中的相关性研究只能证明初中生的计算机能力与他们的数学成绩间有一定的关联性,但并不能说明二者之间确实存在因果联系,或者说并不是计算机能力强的学生数学成绩一定会好。

第十三章把行动研究和评价研究放在一起讨论,因为这两种研究都以解决当时当地某一现实问题为目的,研究的主体都是教师而非专业人员,并且都不强调研究结果的推广性。这两种方法的区别在于,行动研究需采取某种革新活动,评价研究则要衡量质量的高低;行动研究的运用范围多局限于所研究的环境,而评价研究则希望能找到具有推广价值的项目或活动。

本书强调了行动研究对教师职业发展的重要意义,相应的案例是“设计一种真实性评定”。这个行动研究的背景如下:科学课老师希望加强学生运用知识的能力,但传统的测验方法却难以达到这个目标。为了弥补传统测验方法难以考察高层次认知能力的不足,教师特意设计了一种真实性判定方法,让学生运用矩阵决策法分析一些与医学或生物伦理学相关的热点问题,如动物实验、人体器官捐赠等。通过实际的决策过程,学生们学会了如何设计各种可行的决策方案,懂得了怎样确定决策标准以及如何给决策方案赋以权重,最后能够算出最佳的决策方案。这一案例显示,行动研究

关注教师身边亟待解决的现实问题，研究过程就是从发现和分析问题开始，然后设计并实施行动方案，最后要评价行动的效果并找到下一步的行动策略。行动研究本身并没有特定的研究方法，需综合运用描述研究、实验研究和评价研究等多种研究方法。但是，行动研究对研究方法的要求相对不是很严格，主要以解决实际问题为目的。

本书也提供了一个有关小班教学效果的评价报告，题目是“班级规模起到了影响作用吗？”这个题目具有很强的实际意义，因为小班教学的效果到底怎么样需要用事实来评价。案例证实，与大班教学相比，小班教学的确有更好的效果，而且如果教师在教学中热情活跃，并能充分运用角色扮演等活动方式则效果更好。虽然这一结果并无太多神奇之处，但它充分体现了评价研究的特点，也就是要让数据和事实说话，要通过对比来判断好坏。评价研究能综合运用定量和定性两种收集资料的方法，如测量、问卷、观察、访谈等。评价研究的一个新的趋势是关注对过程的评价，而不仅仅局限于对结果的考查。

第十四章介绍了实验研究、准实验研究和因果比较性研究。这三种研究类型都以探索自变量和因变量之间的因果关系为目的，但由于自变量可以被操纵的程度不同，三种类型的研究之间又存在着本质的差异。实验研究中的自变量能够完全被操纵或改变，如可以随机地把学生分成实验组和对照组，实验组采用一种新的教学法，对照组则采用旧的教学法，然后对比两种不同教学法所产生的差异。实验研究需随机分派实验对象，但这在现实教育情境中常常是难以做到的。很多情况下，只能在既有的分组状态下开展实验研究，此时称其为准实验研究。实验研究和准实验研究的区别只在于前者能随机地分派实验对象，后者却不能。本书提供了一个实验研究案例，题目是“职前教师积极自我概念的发展”。实验对象是一些职前教师，他们被随机分配到三个实验组和一个对照组，实验组分别接受三小时、六小时和九小时的坚定自信培训；对照组则不进行培训，用以考察三种时间长短不同的培训是否都能提高职前教师的自尊水平。实验证明：接受了九个小时培训的实验组与对照组之间在自尊水平上存在着显著的差异，即九小时的坚定自信培训确实提高了受训者的自尊水平。这一案例让我们看到实验研究的以下特点：1) 需要提出明确的实验假设，即自变量（某种新措施）和因变量（某种可能结果）间的因果联系；2) 需要操纵自变量，即实施某种新措施；3) 需要对比因变量在实验前后的变化，并根据比较后的结果得出支持或否定假设的结论。依此过程，书中的案例是这样进行的：首先假定一种培养教师坚定自信行为的短期培训课程能够提升职前教师的自尊水平，然后实施了这种培训，最后定量考察了培训前后教师自尊水平的变化。结果显示，培训课程显著提高了受训者的自尊水平。实验过程中，实验者首先要对实验中的自变量给以清楚的界定和说明，如案例中有关培训方案的详细描述。其次，由于实验研究的效果是通过对比因变量的大小得出的，因而要确定因变量的操作化定义并具体测查因变量的水平，如案例中对自尊的定义和测量。当然，实验研究还可以再补充一些定性材料来说明实验效果。

因果比较性研究与实验研究虽然都是探讨自变量与因变量之间的因果联系，但实验研究能够操纵自变量，因果比较性研究则完全不能。以“性别和学业成绩对职业自我效能感和职业兴趣的影响”

为例，性别是无法由研究者操控的变量，可是研究者又想证明性别对学生的职业自我效能感和职业兴趣有影响，于是开展因果比较性研究，也就是要比较男女学生在职业自我效能感和职业兴趣上的差异。因果比较性研究需要测查因变量，然后通过统计检验方法考察自变量的不同类型（如男女）或水平（如学业成绩）对因变量的影响。因果比较性研究通常采用问卷或测量方法收集数据，并经历假设检验的过程，是一种比较规范的定量研究。因果比较性研究能够在一定程度上说明因果关系，这是它和相关性研究的本质不同。

总的来看，本书的特色在于充分利用案例来说明研究的过程，并提供了大量网络资源作为辅助材料。案例和网络资源为读者提供了良好的学习参考，让学生思考不同的研究方法，进而掌握具体的操作策略。阅读本书时，不妨先阅读第一部分，了解研究的性质和类型，然后可以初步看一看第四部分的案例，让自己对实际的研究活动有所体会。最后，针对自己感兴趣的课题，学习第二和第三部分，也就是掌握研究的初步技能并开展自己的研究活动。当然，诚如本书作者所说，具体的阅读方法可以根据不同的学习需要灵活安排。

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